

Message Text

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y USNATO ADDED TO ADD PATTERN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GE

SUBJECT: GAUS COMMENTS ON ABRASIMOV APPOINTMENT AND FRG/GDR RELATIONS

1. ON THURSDAY, MARCH 13, AT MY REQUEST, I MET WITH GUENTER GAUS, HEAD OF THE FRG PERMANENT REPRESENTATION TO THE GDR. I ASKED HIM, IF HE THOUGHT IT APPROPRIATE, TO GIVE ME HIS VIEWS ON THE REPLACEMENT OF SOVIET AMBASSADOR YEFREMOV BY PIOTR ABRASIMOV. HE ACCEDED READILY, BUT EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS NOT SPEAKING FOR HIS GOVERNMENT BUT FROM HIS EXPERIENCE IN THE GDR, REPRESENTING THE CHANCELLOR IN NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE FRG AND GDR.

2. HE ASSIGNED TWO MAJOR REASONS TO THE PERSONNEL SHIFT, BOTH ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE ATTITUDE AND WHAT HS CONSIDERS THE POLICY DIRECTION OF THE SOVIET UNION.

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A) SOVIET DISSATISFACTION WITH EVENTS IN BERLIN--

LAST SUMMERS'S ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY,DISPUTE, ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EC VOCATIONAL INSTITUTE, GOVERNING MAYOR SCHUTZ'S ASSUMPTION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR FRG CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH FRANCE, THE QUESTION OF ACCESS BY WESTERN AIRLINES, AND MOST RECENTLY THE INTRODUCTION OF FRG POLICE, IN WEST BERLIN AT THE TIME OF THE LORENZ KIDNAPPING. GAUS SAID THE SOVIET UNION CONSIDERS THAT SUCH ACTIVITIES VIOLATE THE QA AND THAT THE SOVIETS ARE UNEASY ABOUT FURTHER SUCH DEVELOPMENTS.

B) THE SOVIET UNION CONSIDERS THAT THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GDR AND FRG TO NEGOTIATE AN NUMBER OF ISSUES REPRESENTS A GDR ATTITUDE WITH WHICH THE SOVIETS DO NOT AGREE, TO PROCEED ON ISSUES OF TOO LARGE SCOPE AND TOO QUICKLY, AND THAT THE SOVIET UNION DESIRES TO IMPOSE A TIGHTER GRIP ON THE GDR WITH RESPECT TO THESE FRG-GDR NEGOTIATIONS AND FUTURE RELATIONS.

3. TO SUBSTANTIATE HIS VIEW ON (B) ABOVE, HE DESCRIBED A RECENT CHANGE IN POLICY BY THE GDR WITH RESPECT TO THE AGREED NEGOTIATIONS. HE SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN AGREED BY HONECKER AND SCHMIDT THAT THE ISSUES TO BE NEGOTIATED WOULD BE AT THEIR POLITICAL LEVELS, THOUGHT GAUS AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF HONECKER. GAUS SAID THAT THIS WAS OF PRIME IMPORTANCE TO HIS GOVERNMENT, FIRST BECAUSE THE FRG DESIRED TO SECURE POLITICAL CONCESSIONS AND SECOND BECAUSE IT WAS NECESSARY TO KEEP THE LARGE EXPENDITURES TO BE INCURRED BY THE FRG UNDER CONTROL. HE NOTED THAT HONECKER HAD SAID, "WE DO NOT WANT THE TECHNICIANS TO RUN THE NEGOTIATIONS". REFERRING TO RECENT GDR OFFICIAL AND PRESS CHARGES THAT THE FRG WAS DELAYING THE COMMENCEMENT OF NEGOTIATIONS, GAUS SAID THE DELAY HAD ACTUALLY BEEN CAUSED BY A GDR CHANGE IN POLICY. HE TOLD ME THAT ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 13, KURT NIER, GDR DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, HAD ASKED TO SEE HIM. NIER TOLD HIM THAT THE GDR HAD DECIDED TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS THE LATTER PART OF PARIL BUT UNDER NEW CONDITIONS. THE GDR HAD NAMED THREE SETS OF NEGOTIATORS, ALL TECHNICIANS, UNDER LOW LEVEL FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS TO NEGOTIATE SEPARATELY RAILWAY TRANSPORT, CONFIDENTIAL

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AUTOBAHN TRANSPORT, AND COMMERCIAL MATTERS----
SUCH AS TRANSFER OF BANK ACCOUNTS TO PERSONS WHO HAD MOVED FROM THE GDR TO FRG OR VICE VERSA. GAUS BELIEVES THE PROCEDURE WAS DIRECTED BY THE SOVIETS, WHO DO NOT WANT IT TO APPEAR THAT THE GDR REFUSES TO NEGOTIATE BUT THINK IT LIKELY THAT SUCH A PROCEDURE WILL BE LONG DRAWN OUT AND LIKELY TO BREAK DOWN. GAUS SAID THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE TO NEGOTIATE ALL MATTERS FOR THE FRG BUT

CONSIDERS THE GDR PROCEDURE COULD HAVE THE RESULTS DESIRED BY THE SOVIETS--CERTAINLY PROLONGED NEGOTIATIONS. HE ALSO NOTED THAT HE CONSIDERS THE FAILURE OF THE GDR OFFICIALS TO VISIT THE FRG EXHIBIT AT LEIPZIG AS NOT AFFECTING FRG-GDR TRADE BUT POSSIBLY SOVIET-INSPIRED AS A POLITICAL SLAP AT THE FRG. HE EMPHASIZED SEVERAL TIMES SOVIET UNEASINESS OVER EVENTS IN WEST BERLIN AND THE TOO-RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF FRG-GDR RELATIONS. HE SAID THIS VIEW WAS REINFORCED BY CONVERSATIONS WITH SEVERAL AMBASSADORS OF THE SOVIET BLOC WHO HAD REMARKED THAT THE SUBJECTS TO BE NEGOTIATED REPRESENTED TOO MUCH, TOO QUICKLY ON THE PART OF THE GDR.

4. GAUS CONSIDERS ABRASIMOV A VERY ABLE, HARD NEGOTIATOR, SUPERIOR TO YEFREMOV, AND HIS PURPOSE WILL BE TO PRESENT A HARD LINE ON FRG ACTIVITIES IN WEST BERLIN AND INTERPRETATION OF THE QA AND TO WATCH CAREFULLY THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE GDR. HE SPOKE OF SOVIET AMBASSADOR FALIN AS A VERY ABLE MAN AND OBSERVED THAT THE SOVIET PERHAPS DESIRED A MAN OF SIMILAR STATUR IN THE GDR.

5. COMMENT: GAUS' VIEWS ON THE ABRASIMOV APPOINTMENT MUST BE SEEN IN TERMS OF HIS OWN OVERRIDING CONCERN WITH THE FUTURE OF A NEGOTIATION IN WHICH HE IS CURRENTLY INVOLVED. NEVERTHELESS, THE PACE OF INNER-GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE MAY WELL BE ONE OF THE FIRST INDICATORS BY WHICH TO ASSESS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ABRASIMOV APPOINTMENT.COOPER

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